

Written Testimony on Behalf of the Connecticut State Library (H.B. No. 5037)

Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and Appropriations Committee members:

I am writing today in support of the Connecticut State Library and libraries across the state. I am pleased to see Governor Lamont's proposed budget maintains funding for the State Library and the important programs and services it provides to residents and local libraries.

In particular, the funding to support cooperating library service units, that partially funds the Connecticut Library Consortium (CLC), is an excellent investment in libraries of all types across the state. CLC provides assistance to Connecticut's libraries by negotiating group purchase agreements with vendors and supporting continuing education and networking opportunities for librarians and library workers. As the director of Avon Free Public Library, I can tell you that my library alone saved over \$59,000 on books, electronic resources, supplies, and other purchases last year by taking advantage of discounts and contracts offered through CLC. That is money that we can then reinvest in providing services to those who use our library. Statewide, CLC leveraged a \$124,402 investment of State dollars into \$6.8 million in total savings for libraries.

Similarly, the Connecticard program, which incentivizes reciprocal borrowing by offering grants to all participating libraries, provides Connecticut residents with access to literally millions of books and other resources held by 160+ public libraries around the state. For smaller libraries such as Avon, this program is an invaluable tool in our work to provide for the varying information needs of our users. It is gratifying to see this program maintain its funding in the Governor's proposed budget.

Over the past two years, libraries have once again demonstrated the crucial role they play in times of crisis. Throughout the pandemic, libraries have been there to help those working and going to school remotely. From providing access to fast and stable wifi and printing and scanning services, to helping novices navigate the new world of virtual meetings and classrooms, to just providing a quiet place to work or study, Connecticut's libraries have helped so many people continue to work and learn despite the constraints of a global pandemic.

Governor Lamont's proposed budget maintains State level funding that supplements the local tax dollars that are the main source of income for most libraries. With increased investment in the Connecticut State Library and its programs and services, our local libraries can make a real difference in the lives of our residents and the success of our state.

Sincerely,

Glenn Grube
Director, Avon Free Public Library
Past-President, Connecticut Library Association